

Application No.: 10/608452

Docket No.: TOW-030

REMARKS

Applicants amend claims 1-4 and 5-12. No new matter is added. Support for the claim amendments can be found throughout the specification and at least at Figs. 2-8 and its related text. Claims 1-12 are pending, of which claims 1, 6, 11, and 12 are independent. Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims define over the art of record.

Claimed Invention

Applicants amend the pending claims to clarify the claimed invention. Independent claims 1, 6, 11, and 12 recite *a plurality of cell assemblies* formed individually and each having a plurality of unit cells. Hence, the claimed invention requires at least two cell assemblies (sometimes also referred to as fuel cell stacks). In order to connect the fuel gas passages, oxygen-containing gas passages, or coolant passages between the multiple cell assemblies, a fuel gas outlet/inlet passage, a oxygen-containing gas outlet/inlet passage, and a coolant passage are provided, respectively, *outside of the multiple cell assemblies* to connect the corresponding passages between the multiple cell assemblies. Additionally, a fuel gas adjusting mechanism, oxygen-containing gas adjusting mechanism, coolant adjusting mechanism connecting to the fuel gas outlet/inlet passage, oxygen-containing gas outlet/inlet passage, coolant passage, respectively, can be provided to control the flow rate and direction of fuel gas, oxygen-containing gas, and coolant, respectively.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0186093 to St-Pierre et al. (hereafter "St-Pierre").

Applicants respectfully submit that the St-Pierre reference does not disclose *a plurality of cell assemblies* and each having a plurality of unit cells, as required by independent claims 1, 6, 11, and 12. The St-Pierre reference only discloses a single cell assembly system. See Fig. 6. Furthermore, the St-Pierre reference does not disclose a fuel gas outlet/inlet passage *outside of* the cell assemblies and *connecting* the fuel gas passages of the multiple cell assemblies, as required by independent claims 1 and 6. The St-Pierre reference also does not disclose an oxygen-containing gas outlet/inlet passage *outside of* the cell assemblies and *connecting* the

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oxygen-containing gas outlet/inlet passage *outside* of the cell assemblies and *connecting* the oxygen-containing gas passages of the multiple cell assemblies, as required by independent claim 11. The St-Pierre reference further does not disclose a coolant passage outlet/inlet passage *outside* of the cell assemblies and *connecting* the coolant passages of the multiple cell assemblies, as required by independent claim 12.

Accordingly, the St-Pierre reference fails to disclose each and every element and limitation of independent claims 1, 6, 11 and 12. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 6, 11, and 12.

Applicants respectfully note that the dependent claims also recite separate patentable subject matter. As such, for this and the reasons set forth above, the dependent claims also define over the art of record.

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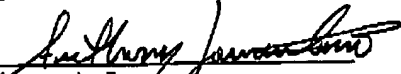
CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicants believe no fee is due with this statement. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. TOW-030 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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